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Box #2
Even Week
8 July 2020

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New Stuff: broccoli, kohlrabi, orange beets
Choice Box: Basil plants

In the course of the farming season, we sometimes find that certain crops do not mature when expected, in the amount expected. That is the case with our early broccoli. I've been picking small, irregular heads for a week now. I accumulated enough to give to the Family Shares, but not enough for everyone. To separate the items that certain Shares get from those that everyone gets, I specify which size Share gets that item, and color-code it. **Green** is for Couple and EOW Only items, **orange** is for Family. The dictates of Mother Nature.

Broccoli is loaded with vitamins A, C, calcium, potassium and iron. To enjoy most of its nutritional value tho, eat broccoli raw. Or, gently cook or steam broccoli just until bright green and al dente. It's best stored inside a plastic bag in your refrigerator. Broccoli should keep for about a week. You may find a green cabbage worm or two in your broccoli. They don't bite, and are easy to remove. Check for them underneath the florets as you wash or cut broccoli up, and deposit them in your compost container if you find any. Because we're organic, we do not spray for cabbage worms unless there is a large infestation, and there isn't right now. I imagine the killdeer and robins find them quite a tasty treat.
Broccoli florets are aptly named: they are flower buds. If left to bloom, the buds open up into bright, yellow flowers. The younger a head of broccoli is, the smaller the buds. We try to harvest them when the buds are around 1/16". Sometimes, the buds don't mature evenly and you'll see larger and smaller buds on one head.
This patch of broccoli did not grow very tall, or develop uniform heads, so you'll find some florets taller, others shorter, within the same head. The attached leaves are small and reasonably tender. It tastes quite sharp, so we recommend cooking it first. In fact, we recommend parboiling it first, then cooking it however you prefer. To parboil any vegetable, bring a pot of water to a boil (8 cups or more), drop the vegetable in for 1-2 minutes, then remove it from the water to either cool down or continue preparing another way.

In our neck of the woods, **kohlrabi** is a favorite vegetable. When I ask my West Bend Farmer's Market customers how they like to eat it, they say, "Raw, with a little salt."
Kohlrabi has a juicy, mild flavor, and is excellent eaten raw. If you've eaten broccoli stems, you'll find kohlrabi similar in flavor, which makes sense once you know they are close relatives and share the same botanical name *brassica oleracea*.
The name "kohlrabi" derives from kohl, German for "cabbage" and rabi, meaning "turnip". Many botanists believe kohlrabi was bred from both plants. The bulb is actually a swollen section of the plant's stem, which is why the leaves radiate from it.
Nutritionally, kohlrabi contains large amounts of vitamins A and C as well as minerals potassium and calcium. High in fiber, kohlrabi has only 40 calories per cup.
To use it, trim off the leaves and peel it with a paring knife. Start by cutting off the bottom: you'll see a ring of small, white "hairs". Cut just inside the hairs, underneath the kohlrabi's skin and work your way around it like you would peel an apple. With the skin removed, slice it any way you like. I favor julienned pieces in a salad. It's great shredded and added to coleslaw, or in chunks on a veggie and dip tray. Store kohlrabi in a plastic bag and put it in your frig to keep it from drying out. It'll keep for several weeks, unpeeled.

Couscous with Kohlrabi & Chermoula Dressing
Makes 6 servings.
In a small saucepan, put:
1 cup water or stock
-cover, and bring to a boil.
Add: **1 cup couscous**
Cover, turn off heat and let sit for 5 minutes. Uncover, fluff with a fork and put into a large serving bowl.
In small bowl, put:
1-2 tsp. minced garlic
2 Tbsp. minced cilantro

2 Tbsp. minced fresh parsley
1 tsp. paprika
½ tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. Kosher salt

-mash these together with a fork, or put into a mini-chopper.

Add: **3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice**
3 Tbsp. olive oil

Whisk together, then pour over couscous. Mix.

Add: **2 cups peeled, diced kohlrabi**
½ cup diced radishes
16 olives (kalamata are recommended)
½ cup crumbled feta cheese

Toss gently, and serve.

Let me say a few words about **orange beets**. These beets are sweeter and milder than red beets, but still taste like beets. Their greens are also sweeter and milder than those of red beets, and just as edible. I often prepare orange beets using Terry's Favorite Way To Cook Any Vegetable (below) by starting to cook the roots, then adding the stems and leaves. Simple, tasty and extremely healthy. I said this in the last newsletter, but I'm going to say it again: grate a raw, orange beet into your next salad. Don't peel it first, no need, just scrub it clean and grate. Sweet, crunchy, yummy.

Or, roast the orange beets along with the red ones. As we were picking and bunching beets to put into your boxes, we came across a few Chioggia beets. These are an Italian heirloom variety with concentric white and pink rings. Yes, they taste differently too. So a lucky few will get not only red and orange beets, but a Chioggia beet as well. What's in your box?

Terry's Favorite Way To Cook Any Vegetable: Get out a 9"-10" skillet that has a lid. Put it on a low flame and add **2 Tbsp. butter**. Add the vegetable(s) you want to the skillet, some **salt and freshly-ground pepper**. Stir, cover and cook until you reach the desired doneness, stirring a few times along the way. I think this simple method brings out the purest flavor of the vegetable you're cooking. When you know what something really tastes like, you can make better choices when combining it with other vegetables.

The basil patch has grown nicely over the past week. You won't have enough basil in these bunches to make this recipe, but cut the recipe in half, or substitute other greens (like chard, beet greens) to come up with 2 cups. I've heard carrot tops are quite good. There are other suggestions at the end of the recipe.

Basil Pesto

makes approx. 2 cups pesto

In the bowl of a food processor, put:

2 cups, packed, fresh basil leaves, washed and spun/dried
4 medium cloves garlic, chopped coarsely
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly-ground pepper
1/4 cup almonds, walnuts, pine nuts, etc.
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Process all ingredients just until uniform in size. Add more salt, pepper, etc. to suit your taste. You can also freeze this pesto, altho the flavor and texture are better if you leave out the cheese. Pesto is a pretty potent sauce on pasta, so use sparingly. Start with about 1 Tbsp. per serving, taste, then increase the amount, if desired. Pesto can be frozen easily. I buy a package of the ½ cup containers and put the finished paste in those. To thaw, take a container out of the freezer the night before and put it into your refrigerator. Do NOT try to thaw it in the microwave: it'll turn black. Basil oxidizes easily, so always cover it when you're not actually spooning some out. If you can, pour a thin film of olive oil over the top of the paste to protect it from the air.

"Pesto" simply means "paste". You can make pesto with other herbs besides basil. People often substitute parsley when they're a bit short on basil for this recipe. I've made delicious herb pestos using tarragon, thyme, parsley, fennel, sage, lovage, oregano, rosemary, marjoram, Summer savory and sorrel. Use one quarter to half as much of the stronger herbs: sage, rosemary and lovage, as the others.

If you're looking for something quick, here's an Asian riff on chard:

Asian-Style Chard

Wash chard and cut out stems. Grouping several stems together, cut into 1" lengths and set aside.

Pile leaves together, and chop roughly.

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, put:

1 Tbsp. oil

-and heat until it shimmers. Add stems, toss and cook 1-2 minutes.

Put in: **chard leaves**
2 garlic cloves, minced

-cook until leaves begin to wilt, 2-3 minutes, stirring often.

Stir in: **1 Tbsp. soy sauce**
2 Tbsp. hoisin sauce

-stir and cook until chard is tender, 2-3 more minutes.

Add: **freshly-ground pepper to taste**

Serve immediately.

Field Notes

We've gotten rain almost every day from these pop-up thunderstorms. It makes the air more humid, but replenishes the moisture the ground is losing to this heat. Tuesday's rain looks like it's going to give us around a half inch versus the .2" from these other, pop-up storms. The forecast for Wednesday is 90 degrees and humid, no rain, so perhaps we need it today.
Chuck dug up some potatoes for me to make a potato salad over the weekend. They were good-sized, so perhaps New Potatoes are coming our way soon?
The sweet corn is growing taller daily, tassles high, with ears forming. They can't mature fast enough for me, tho.



Our garlic patch is right on schedule for digging: stems are thick, leaves starting to dry at the ends—we're about a week away. Altho we can't see them, the bulbs are putting on size and weight. You'll likely find fresh garlic in next week's box.

And that's it for me this week, folks.
Stay Cool,
Terry & Chuck